



— The 2010 Vintage — The 2010s did not play second fiddle to 2009s !

A very cold end to the winter and beginning of spring led to a delayed start to the growing season. Late bud burst (starting April 28) protected the young shoots from spring frosts.

The Bud burst :

Wetter weather during bud burst combined with a clear increase in temperatures from mid-April onwards led to a very consistent set with very few "windows" in the canopy.

The Flowering :

Beginning on May 28 for the Merlot and ending on June 11 for the Cabernet, flowering was very staggered and coupled with a lot of shatter on the Merlot, significantly reducing production potential for a crop that looked heavy judging from the number and size of inflorescences at the end of May (similar to the wonderful start to flowering in 2009). Warm weather in July was particularly favourable, especially during the first fortnight, and erased some of this post-flowering heterogeneity.

The Veraison :

Occurring from May 28 for the Merlot and ending on June 10 with the Cabernet, veraison got off to a late start - particularly compared with 2005 - but ended rather quickly, so much so that the young "whip-like" vine shoots were not visible for long. The record water shortage that year, which slowly but surely increased from June 16 onwards, bode particularly for the quality of the crop. The extremely severe water shortfall produced remarkably small berries along with higher phenolic concentration than in 2009 though also an amazingly broad aromatic spectrum and well preserved acidity levels. Sparse rainfall during the second week of September (25 mm) sped up veraison of the skins that had suffered localised delays due to water restrictions.

It was very encouraging to witness wonderful synchronisation of technological, phenolic and aromatic ripening that year, despite the high phenol count in the skins. Premium clay soils like those of Fougas proved to be amazingly early-ripening due to more moderate water constraints. Vine phenology in 2010 is very similar to that of 2009 with just one or two days delay at ripening. 2010 looks just as concentrated but with better aromatic richness and freshness and more pronounced exuberance. 2010 is therefore shaping up to be a great vintage for red with all the necessary components in the grapes – abundant ripe tannins, aromatic complexity and well-preserved acidity – to allow it to travel down through the decades.

The Harvest :

Harvesting began on September 23 for the Merlot and ended during the first fortnight of October for the Cabernet-Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc.

The Wines :

The wines are powerful, balanced and very crisp with complex aromas of fruit and flowers.



CHÂTEAU FOUGAS

BP 51 - 33710 LANSAC - France - Tél. 33 (0) 557 684 215 - Fax 33 (0) 557 682 859 - jybechet@fougas.com

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